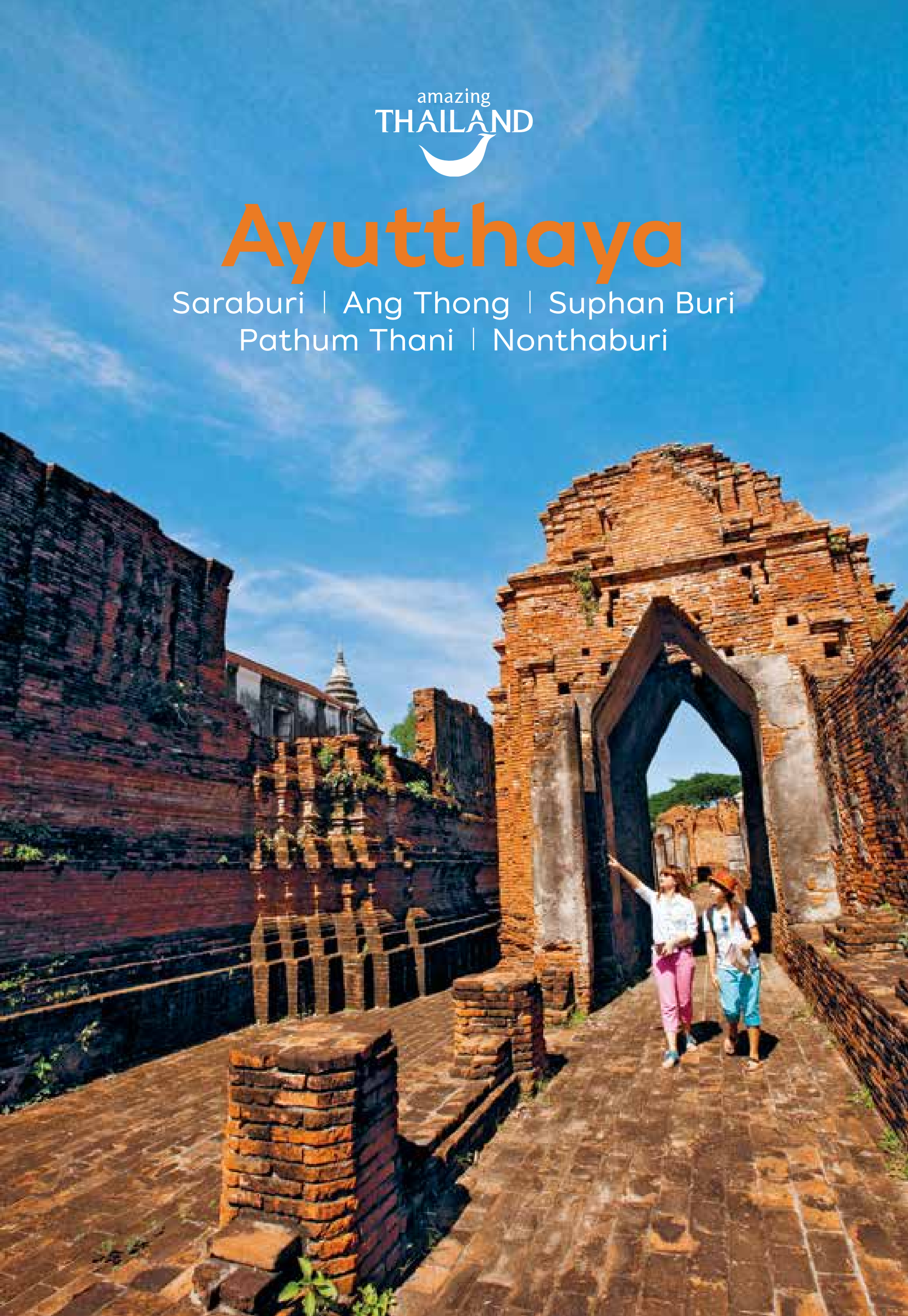

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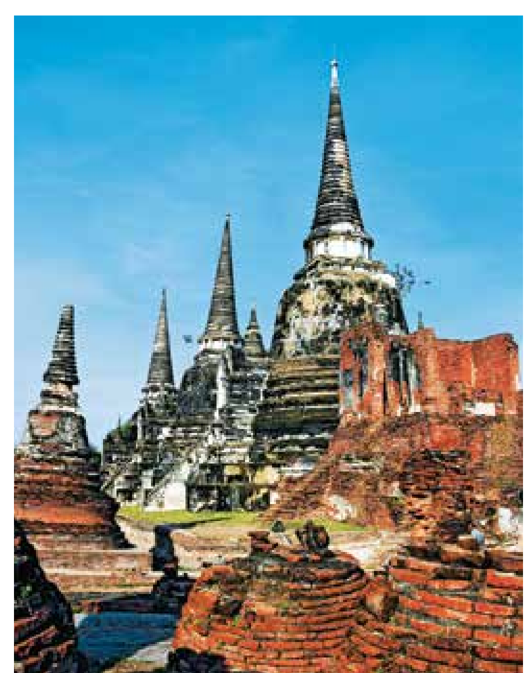
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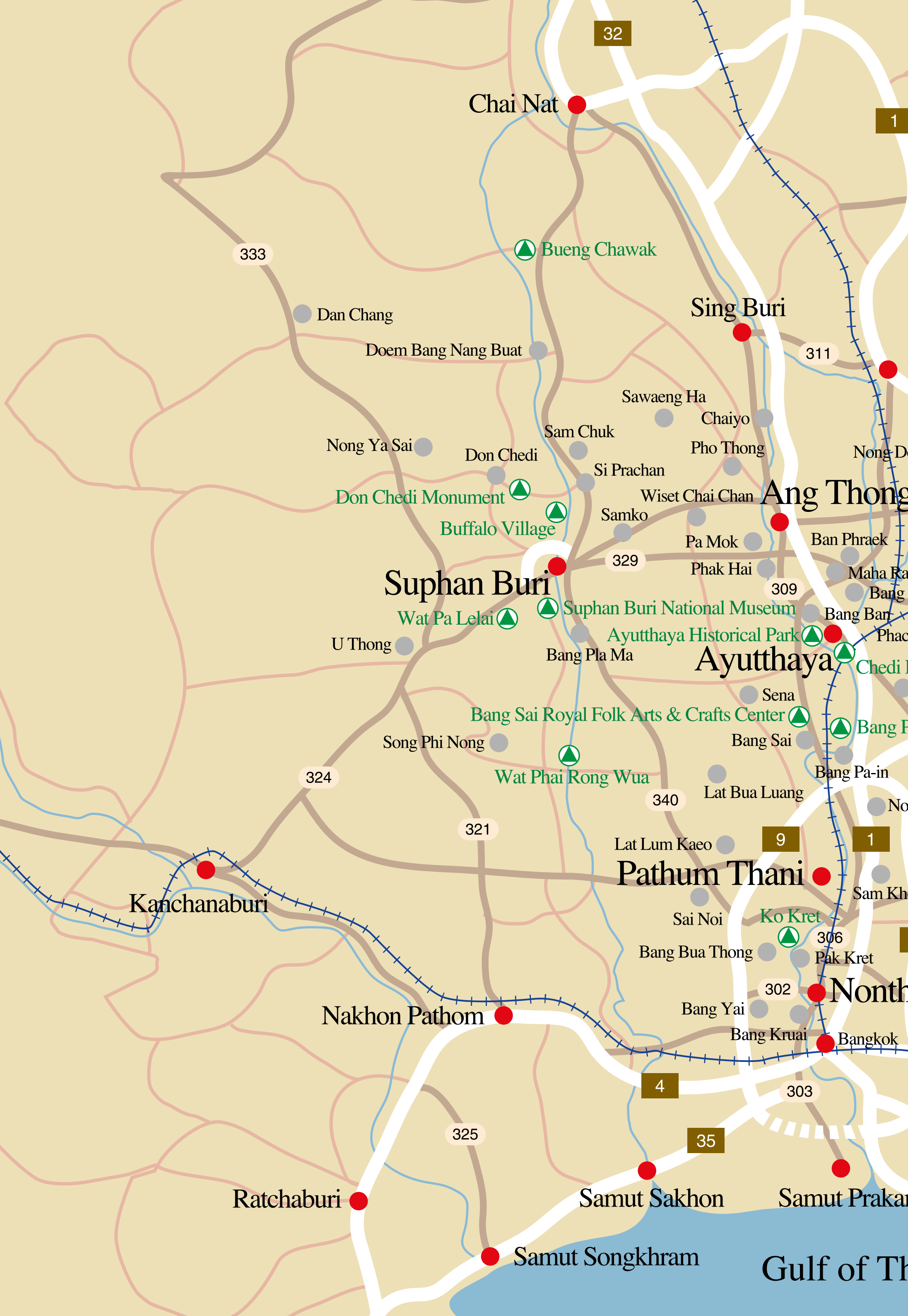









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Wat Yai Chaimongkhon

AYUTTHAYA

Straddling the Chao Phraya River, the nation's principal waterway, the province is extremely important, as it was the Siamese capital for four centuries. This province is relatively small at 2,557 sq. kms. and is easily accessible due to good road, rail, and river connections and its proximity to Bangkok.

The city of Ayutthaya is 76 kilometres north of Bangkok and boasts numerous magnificent ruins from its days as the capital. Just to the south, in perfect condition, stands the royal palace of Bang Pa-in set in splendid gardens. The province is also noted for H.M. the Queen's Bang Sai Arts and Crafts Centre.

The ancient city of Ayutthaya, formally designated

Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya was the Thai capital for 417 years, and is one of Thailand's major tourist attractions. Many ancient ruins and works of art can be seen in a city that was founded in 1350 by King U-Thong when the Thais were forced southwards by northern neighbours. During the period when Ayutthaya was capital, 33 kings and several dynasties ruled the kingdom, until the glittering city was sacked by the Burmese in 1767, ruined and abandoned.

The extensive ruins and the historical records demonstrate that Ayutthaya was one of Southeast Asia's most prosperous cities. In recognition of its historical and cultural importance, Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Historical Park, the location of the ruins adjacent to today's city, was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1991.

CITY ATTRACTIONS

Ayutthaya Historical Study Centre(AHSC)

Located on Rochana Road, this Centre is devoted to the study of Ayutthaya, exhibiting the reconstructions of the city's past.

The centre provides information services and a library containing historical materials about Ayutthaya. Open on Tuesday - Saturday at 9.00 a.m.- 4.30 p.m. (Closing on Sunday and Monday) For more information, contact Tel. +66 3524 5123.

Chao Sam Phraya National Museum

Located on Rochana Road, opposite the city wall, the Museum houses antique bronze Buddha images, local artefacts, and other art objects dated back to more than 500 years ago. Open on Tuerday - Saturday at 9.00 a.m.-4.30 p.m. (Closing on Sunday and Monday). For more information, contact Tel. +66 3524 1587.

Forts and Fortresses around the City

The forts along the city wall and outer circle fortresses as found in the historical records include Pom Mahachai, Pom Phet, Pom Ho Ratchakhru, Pom Chidkop, Pom Champaphon and Pom Yai. They are mostly situated at waterway junctions.

Palaces and Buildings

There were three palaces in Ayutthaya: the Grand Palace, Chankasem Palace or the Front Palace, and Wang Lang or the Rear Palace.

Grand Palace

Currently called "The Ancient Palace", this residential dwelling for every king was located close to the city wall. Important buildings inside the Grand Palace compound are:

Wihan Somdet Hall The hall was decorated with gold leaf and surrounded by cloisters. It was used for various royal ceremonies including coronations.

Sanphet Prasat Hall This building, in the same design as the Wihan Somdet Hall, was used by the king to welcome foreign envoys and visitors.



Wat Phra Si Sanphet



Wat Phra Mongkhon Bophit

Suriyat Amarin Hall A four-gabled building of sandstone and brick is situated close to the riverside city wall. It was used for observing the royal barge processions.

Chakkrawat Phaichayon Hall This three-gabled hall is on the inner eastern city wall in front of the Grand Palace. It was used to view processions and military exercises.

Trimuk Hall Located behind the Sanphet Prasat Hall, this hall is believed to have been the royal consorts' living quarters with a regal leisure garden.

Banyong Rattanat Hall This four-gabled hall is located on an island in a pond at the back of the Grand Palace.

Wat Phra Si Sanphet

Originally used as a royal chapel, this large temple compound contains a line of three tall stupas. This line of stupas has become widely identifiable with the Ayutthaya style. It is open everyday from 8.00 a.m. – 6.00 p.m. For more details, contact +66 3524 2286, +66 3524 2525.

Wihan Phra Mongkhon Bophit

Phra Mongkhon Bophit, a large bronze cast Buddha image, was originally enshrined outside the Grand Palace to the east, but later transferred to the west and under the cover. In the 1767 sacking of Ayutthaya, the building and the image were badly damaged by fire and the renovated ensemble is not as finely crafted as the original. The open area east of the Wihan (Temple) was formerly Sanam Luang, where the royal cremation ceremonies took place.

Wat Phra Ram

This temple is situated next to a pond, outside the Grand Palace compound to the east, with a pond in front. King Ramesuan had it built where King U-Thong's royal cremation ceremony took place. It now also functions as Phra Ram Public Park. It is open everyday from 8.00 a.m. – 6.00 p.m.

Wat Mahathat

Located in front of the Grand Palace to the east near Pa Than Bridge, this temple was constructed



Wat Phra Ram



Wat Mahattat

in King Borom Rachathirat I's reign. It is open everyday from 8.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.

Wat Ratchaburana

This temple is located near Pa Than Bridge opposite Wat Mahathat. King Borom Rachathirat II commanded two Stupas to be built where Chao Ai and Chao Yi engaged in elephant-back combat during which both were killed. Later, he added a wihan so as to create a temple. It is open everyday from 8.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.

Somdet Phra Srinagarindra Park

Situated on U-Thong Road to the southwest of the city, this is a large public park with a display of various plants referred to in Thai literature.

Chantharakasem or Front Palace

This palace beside the Pasak River was built by King Maha Thammaracha, the 17th Ayutthaya monarch, as a residence for his son. Like other ruins, it was destroyed in 1767 by the Burmese and abandoned for many years. In the mid-19th century, King Rama IV ordered to rebuild it as a residence for his occasional visits to Ayutthaya.



Wat Ratchaburana

Some of the more interesting sites are:

City Wall and Gate These were newly constructed by King Rama IV. The foundation of the wall has been discovered; revealing that the original area was much larger than what it is seen today.

Phlapphla Chaturamuk This wooden four-gabled pavilion is located near the east gate of the palace and was a residence of King Rama IV during his visits to Ayutthaya.

Phiman Rattaya Hall A group of buildings located amidst the compound of the Grand Palace which once served as government offices.

Phisai Sanyalak Hall This is a four-storey tower located close to the western side of the Grand Palace. First built under the reign of King Narai the Great, but destroyed during the second fall of Ayutthaya. It was reconstructed by King Rama IV as an observatory. The palace is now used as a national museum displaying chinaware, weapons, Buddha images, sculptures, and votive tablets of different times, and personal effects of King Rama IV. Open everyday 9.00 a.m. - 4.00 p.m. except Monday, Tuesday and national holidays.

Wat Senasanaram

This ancient temple is also known as Wat Sua and is located behind Chankasem Palace. The main attractions are two Buddha images: Phra Samphuttha Muni, the principal image enshrined in the Ubosot, and Phra In Plaeng enshrined in the Wihan. Both were taken from Vientiane, Lao PDR.

Wat Suwandaram

This is a temple within the royal compound, located to the southwest near Pom Phet Fort. Originally called Wat Thong, it was extended and restored several times under the Chakri kings. The upper murals in the Ubosot depict the gathering of the deities, and the lower ones depict stories from the life of the Lord Buddha. The front wall shows the Buddha subduing evil, whereas within the Wihan features the mural painting which depicts the story of King Naresuan the Great.



Wat Suwandaram

Wang Lang or the Rear Palace

Situated close to the western city wall, this palace was originally a royal garden with only one residential building. King Maha Thammaracha had more buildings built, and it became the palace of King Ekathosarot. Later, it became a residence for royal family members.

Chedi Phra Si Suriyothai

This memorial to the first heroine in Thai history is located at Ko Mueang to the west.



Wat Kasattrathirat

Suriyothai was King Maha Chakkraphat's royal consort. In 1548, he went to repel a Burmese invasion. During the fighting on elephant back, the king was in trouble and Suriyothai, clad as a warrior, rode her elephant at the Burmese commander, and was cut to death by his sword. The king had her cremated at a place which became named "Wat Suanluang Sopsawan". In King Rama V's reign, after a quest for the historical site, the exact location of Wat Suanluang Sopsawan was identified with a large indented stupa, renamed Chedi Phra Si Suriyothai. In 1990, the Chedi, which had deteriorated over time, was restored.

Wat Lokkayasutha

This temple adjacent to Wat Worachettharam features a large reclining Buddha, of stuccoclad brick, 29 metres long. Large hexagonal pillar ruins are believed to be the ruins of the Ubosot.

Wat Kasattrathirat

This temple is located outside Ko Mueang, opposite Chedi Phra Si Suriyothai, beside the Chao Phraya River. This is an ancient temple with a prang (stupa) as its centre.

Wat Chaiwatthanaram

Also located beside the river, on the west of the city island, this temple was built by King Prasat Thong in a Khmer-influenced style with a main pagoda and the satellite pagodas along the gallery. It can be reached by river from Chankasem Palace.

Wat Phutthaisawan

This temple is situated on the river bank opposite Ko Mueang to the south, in the area where King U-Thong established his city. The most interesting feature is the great principal Buddha image of the early Ayutthaya Period.

Portuguese Village

The Portuguese Village is located at Samphao Lom, on the west bank of the Chao Phraya River to the south of the city. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to trade with the Ayutthaya Kingdom, sending a diplomatic mission to King Ramathibodi II's court in 1511. The Portuguese also came as military volunteers in Ayutthaya's army and as Christian missionaries, and they settled at this site. Remains of San Petro, a Dominican church, and some objects; such as, tobacco pipes, coins, and religious items have been found here.

Wat Phukhao Thong

Located 2 kms. northeast of the Grand Palace, this temple was constructed in 1387 under King Ramesuan.

Elephant Kraal Pavilion

The kraal and pavilion is located 4 kms. from the city along Highway 309. The kraal is formed by a circular teak stockade and earthen wall



Wat Yai Chaimongkhon

which was created in 1957. The enclosure was used to pen wild elephants for battle training, while being observed by royalty and other spectators. The King also used the pavilion as his vantage point.

Wat Na Phramen

Located on the bank of Khlong Sabua opposite the Grand Palace, this temple of unknown age is of a very ancient traditional Thai style. The most interesting object is the principal Buddha image in regal attire and another image in the small Wihan, made of black stone. It is open everyday from 8.00 a.m. – 6.00 p.m.

Wat Kudidao

Located in front of the railway station, this old temple features superb decorative, though deteriorated craftsmanship.

Wat Samanakottharam

Located near Wat Kudidao, this old temple's main attraction is a large Prang with an unusual design aspect, which is believed to be based on Chedi Chet Yot of Chiang Mai.

OUT-OF-CITY ATTRACTIONS

Wat Yai Chaimongkhon or Wat Chao Phraya Thai

This temple constructed in the reign of King U-Thong is located outside the city to the southeast in which one can see its large chedi from far away. King Naresuan the Great had the stupa built to celebrate his elephant-back victory over the Burmese. It is open everyday from 8.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.

Wat Phananchoeng

Located south of Ayutthaya, this temple existed before the city was founded as the capital city. The Wihan's principal Buddha image was built in 1325. Made of stucco in the position of subduing



Wat Phananchoeng

evil, it is most revered by the local people. It is open everyday from 8.30 a.m. - 5.30 p.m.

Japanese Village

This former district for Japanese expatriates and visitors is located 1.5 kms. from Wat Phanancheong at Ko Rien.

Prasat Nakhon Luang

Situated on the east bank of the Pa Sak River, this structure was used as the royal accommodation during trips to the Holy Footprint Shrine and to Lop Buri. Assumed to have been constructed under King Songtham, it was restored during the reign of King Prasat Thong.

Bang Pa-in Palace

The palace is located 18 kms. south of Ayutthaya, 58 kms. north of Bangkok by rail, and 61 kms. by road. The grounds are open everyday 8.30 a.m.- 5.00 p.m. For more information, call +66 3526 1044 ext. 3404.

Originally, Bang Pa-in was a riverine island. King Prasat Thong (1630-1655) had a palace built on a lake in the middle of the island as a royal retreat, and it was used by every succeeding Ayutthaya monarch. But when the capital moved to Bangkok, the palace was left unused for 80 years.

Bang Pa-in was revived by King Rama IV (1851-1868), who had a house built there. His son, King Rama V the Great (1868-1910), liked the place immensely, stayed there every year, and constructed the splendid ensemble as it is seen today. Important buildings are :

Aisawanthipphaya-at Pavilion An exquisite Thai teak pavilion, was built in the middle of a lake by King Rama V the Great. For reinforcement, King Rama VI had the wooden floor and pillars replaced with concrete.



Aisawanthipphaya-at Pavilion



Withunthasana Tower

Warophat Phiman Hall This European-style building was the Throne Hall where the King received his subjects and visitors. In this hall are paintings of the royal historic records, I-nao literature, Phra Aphai Mani literature, and the Ramayana epic.

Phra Thinang Utthayan Phumisathian The original two-storey wooden building, resembling a large dacha, was destroyed by fire during restoration. Now, a concrete structure of the same model has been built to replace the original.

King Rama VI Theatre King Rama IV had this theatre built in his consort's compound.

Ho Hem Monthian Thewarat King Rama V the Great ordered this Khmer-style stone Prang to be built under a banyan tree beside the long stream, to replace an old shrine built by villagers.

Saphakhan Ratchaprayun This two-storey building on the river bank outside the palace wall was built under the royal command of King Rama V the Great as the living quarters for the non-consort members.

Withunthasana Tower This hall, in the form of a tower, is a three-storey building with a spiral staircase. King Rama V the Great used it to enjoy a bird's eye view of the surrounding area.

Keng Buppha Praphat This Chinese-style pavilion stands within the inner royal compound.

Wehat Chamrun Royal Mansion This hall of a Chinese Emperor-style was a royal offering to King Rama V the Great from Bangkok's Chinese merchant community.

Monument of Queen Sunantha This marble monument was built by King Rama V the Great to keep the ashes of his beloved consort.

Rachanuson Monument King Rama V the Great, in deep sorrow, had this marble relief memorial built to commemorate his beloved consort and three royal children who passed away at different times in the same year, 1887.

Wat Niwet Thammaprawat

On a small island in the Chao Phraya River, opposite the Royal Palace, King Rama V the Great had

this Buddhist temple built in the European Neo-Gothic style with stained glass windows. From Bang Pa-in Palace, visitors can reach the temple on a cable car.

Wat Chumphon Nikayaram

Located opposite to the train station, this temple was founded in 1632 by King Prasat Thong and restored in the mid-19th century.

Bang Sai Royal Folk Arts and Crafts Centre

The Centre is located within the extensive grounds of Bang Sai. Farmers from Ayutthaya and other provinces undergo training in folk arts and crafts here. The Centre offers visitors a glimpse of how farmers in Thailand's four regions live and work, and how their local arts and crafts are produced. The Centre is under the Promotion of Supplementary Occupations and Related Techniques (SUPPORT) scheme, established under the royal patronage in 1976. Products and activities which can be seen here are different kinds of basketry, artificial flowers, hand-woven silk and cotton, silk dyeing, wood carving, miniature handmade Thai dolls, and furniture making. All the products are for sale.

Open everyday between 8.30 a.m. - 4.00 p.m., except Monday. For more information, call/fax. +66 3536 6252-4. *To get there* from Bangkok, take a cruise or a bus from the Northern Bus Terminal (Mochit), or by car take Highway 306 via Nonthaburi and Pathum Thani.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Bang Sai Arts & Crafts Centre Fair

Late January

The fair, held annually in January at the Bang Sai Arts and Crafts Centre displays products



Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Songkran Festival

of H.M. the Queen's SUPPORT programme, which are for sale, and there are exhibitions and demonstrations of products and cultural performances.

World Wai Khru Muay Thai Ceremony

17 March

Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Historical Park

The project focuses on Muay Thai and has further developed this practice within its historical cultural context into an international cultural activity. With the inclusion of the World Wai Khru Muay Thai Ceremony as an integral part of the revival process, it has ensured that the end product maintains its cultural authenticity.

Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Songkran Festival

13-15 April

Around Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya

This festival features merit-making activities, an alms-giving ceremony, bathing ritual of Buddha images, and the releasing of fish and

birds to make good karma. Visitors can enjoy watching the beautiful procession of the Miss Songkran beauty pageant, floral float procession and cultural performances.
Website : www.songkran.net,
www.tourismthailand.org

Bang Sai Loi Krathong Tam Prathip Festival

November

Bang Sai Royal Folk Arts and Crafts Centre under the Royal patronage of H.M.Queen Sirikit

Relive the glorious past of Ayutthaya on this atmospheric night. Enjoy the traditional procession of beauty queens from all 4 regions and experience the relaxing surroundings of a floating market demonstration.

Website : www.loikrathong.net,
www.tourismthailand.org

Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya World Heritage Fair

December

Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya Histirical Park

Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya was once the glorious capital of Thailand. It was also a centre of trade and government, and possessed a long period of prosperity. Be amazed by the light-and-sound show, the exhibitions on Ayutthaya as a World Heritage Site, as well as the cultural performances. Having fun shopping for a variety of OTOP product is another activity.

Website : www.tourismthailand.org



Wat Phutthaisawan

INTERESTING ACTIVITIES

Homestay

Experience the Thai lifestyle by staying overnight at Khlong Rang Chorakhe in Amphoe Sena (Tel. +66 8 9881 1042, +66 8 1251 8058) and or on the Noi River at Bang Sai

Bicycling

There are various routes in and around Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya. Visitors are recommended to take a bike tour in the early morning or during the sunset to enjoy the magical sights of this historic city. For more information, contact the TAT Ayutthaya Office Tel. +66 3524 6076-7.

Elephant Riding

Visitors can ride on the back of an elephant from either opposite Khum Khun Phaen within the area of the Ayutthaya Historical Park For more information Please contact +66 3524 5123-4 or at the Ayutthaya elephant Camp Tel.+66 3521 1001, +66 3532 1982, +66 8 1821 7605, +66 8 1852 4527 to see various attractions around Ayutthaya.

The Ayutthaya Elephant Palace and Royal Kraal Please Tel. +66 3532 1982, +66 8 6901 3981 offers several activities related to elephants; such as, mahout training programme and watch the elephants taking a bath.

River Cruises

There are a number of river tours around Phra Nakhon Si Ayutthaya and to the Bang Pa-in Palace and Bang Sai Arts and Crafts Centre. River cruise with lunch or dinner or board is also available, and it is recommended to take the cruise at night time to enjoy the incredible sight of the once prosperous city. For more information, contact the TAT Ayutthaya Office Tel. +66 3524 6076-7.

Shopping at the Flea Market

Several flea markets in Ayutthaya offer to take visitors to Ayutthaya in the past by imitating the atmosphere of this city in the olden days and providing ancient Thai food, Thai performance and handicrafts as well as hand-made products. Most of the flea markets are open only during weekends, contact TAT Ayutthaya Office at Tel. +66 3542 6076-7 for more information.

HOW TO GET THERE

By Rail

Trains leave from Bangkok's Hua Lamphong Railway Station. Call +66 2220 4567, or Hotline 1690 for more information.

By Bus

From the Bangkok Bus Terminal (Mochit) on Kamphaeng Phet 2 Road, air-conditioned buses leave for Ayutthaya every half-hour from 5.30 a.m. to 7.20 p.m. Non-air-conditioned buses leave for Bang Pa-in, Bang Sai, and Ayutthaya during the day from 5.30 a.m. to 7.20 p.m. For more information, call +66 2936 2852-66 or visit www.transport.co.th.

By Car

1. Take Highway 1 (Phahonyothin Road) then take Highway 32 to Ayutthaya.

2. Take Highway 304 (Chaeng Wattana Road) or Highway 302 (Ngamwongwan Road), turn right onto Highway 306 (Tiwanon Road), then take Highway 3111 (Pathum Thani - Sam Khok - Sena), and turn right at Sena onto Highway 3263.

3. Take Highway 306 through Nonthaburi and Pathum Thani, then take Highway 347.

Boat Trips to Ayutthaya & Bang Pa-in

There are no public boats but several private companies run a one day excursions to Ayutthaya and Bang Pa-in, and some companies provide an overnight cruise for visitors to get a more complete insight of Ayutthaya. For more information, contact Chao Phraya Express Boat: Tel. +66 2623 6001 - 3 , World Travel Service: Oriental Branch: Tel. +66 2234 4875, and River Sun Cruise: Tel. +66 2266 9125.

LOCAL TRANSPORTATION

Mini-buses run from the train station into the city. Hiring a mini-bus within Ayutthaya costs 250-300 Baht/day. Connecting Ayutthaya and Bang Pa-in, mini-buses leave Chao Prom Market from 6.30 a.m. onwards. The fare is about 30 baht and the trip takes 50 minutes.

Skylab or Tuk Tuk

Skylab or Tuk Tuk is another convenient mode of transportation to travel around Ayutthaya. The fare is depending on the route and is negotiable. Some of the drivers can speak English and Japanese.



Wat Phra Phutthabat

SARABURI

Saraburi is a rice-growing province on the Central Plains possessing one of Thailand's most important temples, Wat Phra Phutthabat, and many sites of natural beauty. The provincial capital lies 108 kms. north of Bangkok, on the main highway to the Northeast.

CITY ATTRACTIONS

Thai-Yuan Cultural Study Centre

A traditional Thai wooden house located by the Pa Sak River, Thai-Yuan Cultural Study Centre exhibits the ancient artefacts such as the utensils and local woven textiles. Please contact Tel. +66 3672 5224 prior to the visit.

OUT-OF-CITY ATTRACTIONS

Wat Phra Phutthabat

Wat Phra Phutthabat is one of Thailand's most important temples and is located at Khun Khlon, 28 kms. north of the town. Situated on a hilltop, the spiritual centrepiece is the massive Buddha's Footprint, 21-inches wide, 5-foot long and 11-inches deep. The footprint has 108 religious aspects and was discovered during the reign of King Songtham of Ayutthaya, who had a Mondop built to cover it. Today's Mondop is a square pavilion with a seven-tier roof of green glazed tiles.The outer walls are decorated with gold and coloured glass in the shapes of mythological gods and lotus blossoms. The pearl-inlaid artwork on the doors represents some of the country's best craftsmanship. The Mondop is reached by three Naga (mythical serpent) staircases, with five-headed Nagas cast in bronze flanking their base. Surrounding the Mondop are bells in which visitors can ring as an act of making merit. The adjacent Ubosot and Wihan are in the Ayutthaya and early Rattanakosin styles. Phra Phutthabat National Museum, in the compound, displays various precious artefacts including King Songtham's attire, ceramics, bronzeware, old weapons, and ecclesiastical fans from various periods.

Wat Tham Krabok

This temple and the monks who reside here, are famous for treating drug addicts. It is located at Tambon Khun Khlon, Amphoe Phra Phutthabat, 25 kms. north of the town along Highway No. 1.

Bo Phran Lang Nuea

A small stone well located near Wat Phra Phutthabat carries important local legend. The water that continuously flows from the well is believed to be holy.

Wat Tham Prathun

Located at Khun Khlon, around 3 kms. from Phra Phutthabat, this temple presents the Stupa which houses Buddha relics, as well as two caves.

Tham Phrathat

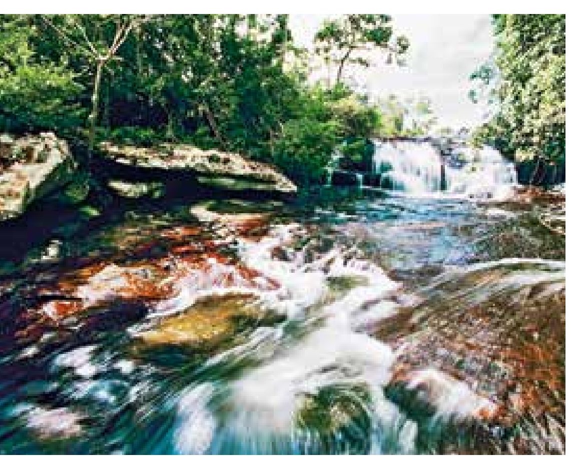
Located 8 kms. south of Wat Phra Phutthabat on a 100-metre hill, this beautiful cave houses a Buddha image.

Tham Thep Nimit Than Thong Daeng

Located at Wat Phu Kham Banphot, at Phu Kham Chan, this cave is a prehistoric archaeological site as Stone Age artefacts were found in the mountain range nearby.

Phu Khae Botanical Gardens

Located in Phu Khae district, 17 kms. from town on the Lop Buri road, these enormous gardens with a flowing stream are a great place for relaxation. Open everyday between 8.00 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.



Khao Sam Lan National Park

Khao Sam Lan National Park

The Park features several mountains, the highest being Khao Khrok (329 metres), from which there are panoramic views and is home to pheasants, jungle fowls, barking deer, monkeys, wild boars, and various birds. Another interesting attraction within the park is numerous waterfalls which can be toured within 2-3 hours on walking trails. The Park has an area of 44 sq. kms. and the entrance is 16 kms. south of the town along Highway 1. around October to January is the best time to visit. The Park offers tents for 80 persons or visitors can bring their own. For more information, call the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation at +66 2562 0760.

Wat Phra Phutthachai

The temple is on Khao Patthawi at Nong Pla Lai and can be reached by taking the same route as for Khao Sam Lan National Park, and turning off at Km. 102. It enshrines Phra Phutthachai or the picture of the Lord Buddha appearing on a cliff wall. A Mondop pavilion was built to shelter the

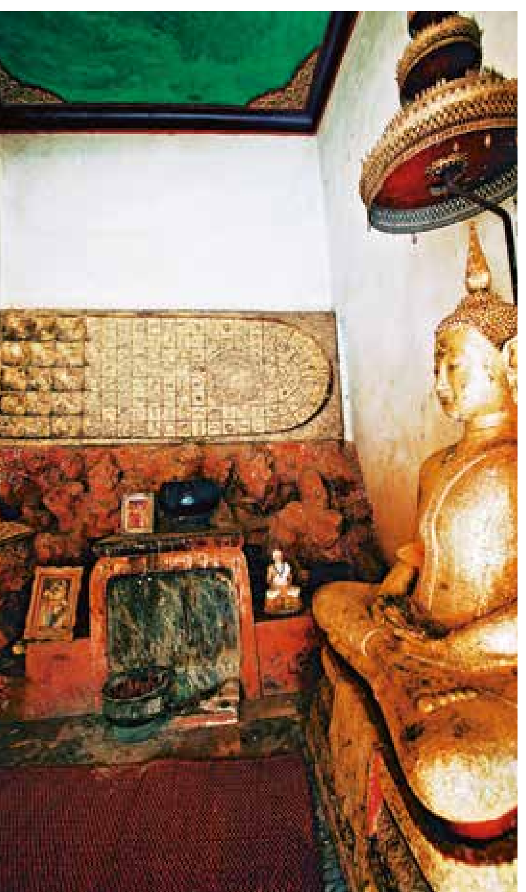


Wat Phra Phutthachai

picture with stairs lead up to the Mondop and onward to the cliff above it. There are interesting prehistoric paintings on the cliff of animals and various symbols.

Crocodile Farm and Zoo

Situated near Wat Phra Phutthachai, the farm consists of a crocodile breeding pond and houses various other species; such as deer, monkeys, and birds.



Wat Khao Kaeo

Tham Si Wilai

Located at Na Phra Lan, some 22 kms. from Saraburi town, the cave houses Phra Phutthanaowarat, a Buddha image of the Chiang Saen period, and beautiful stalactite and stalagmite formations. There are also scenic views of the mountains.

Chao Mae Takhian Thong Shrine

Located near Wat Sung in Amphoe Sao Hai, this is a large pillar believed to contain a female spirit. Believers often give offerings to the spirit inhabiting in the tree with female items.



Wat Tham Phra Phothisat

Wat Khao Kaeo

Located at Ton Tan on the right bank of the Pa Sak River, this peaceful temple was built in King Rama IV's reign and used as his residence when visiting the district. King Rama IV had it renovated and upgraded to a royal temple. It has a peaceful ambience.

Wat Samuha Pradittharam

This royal temple situated at Suan Dok Mai has an attractive chapel with distinctive and beautiful mural paintings. The temple holds an annual boat race around November – December.

Wat Tham Phra Phothisat

Located at Thap Kwang, 32 kms. from Saraburi town, 15 kms. along Highway 2 towards Nakhon Ratchasima, and 11 kms. on the frontage road, the cave temple houses a bas-relief Buddha image on the wall, a Lankan stupa of the Dvaravati period, and monumental stalactites



Namtok Chet Sao Noi or Namtok Sao Noi

and stalagmites. Other caves and a stone garden can be seen in the area.

Tham Phrathat Charoen Tham

This is a three-chambered cave with distinctive marble footpaths. One chamber has a fish pond, another contains stalagmites and stalactites shaped like well-known Chinese gods, and the third has stalactites and stalagmites resembling coral. Two other large caves nearby are worth visiting.

Cruising along the Pa Sak River

The Pa Sak River, which runs through Amphoe Kaeng Khoi offers beautiful scenery of forests, mountains, and high cliffs. Boat trips are operated by some riverside resorts and visitors are advised to take the trip in the evening to enjoy the cool breeze as well as the lovely scenery. For more information, contact Suphalai Pasak Resort, Tel. +66 3630 6270-2 and Bangkok Tel. +66 2725 8888.

Muak Lek Arboretum

Located 37 kms. from Saraburi town along Mittraphap Road, covering an area of 150 acres, this wooded area blooming with flowers features a fast-running stream with a cascade and bridges.

Namtok Chet Sao Noi or Namtok Sao Noi

This seven-level waterfall is located at Muak - Lek and comes complete with a shady swimming area.

Tham Dao Khao Kaeo

Located at Phaya Klang, 35 kms. from Muak Lek or 75 kms. from Saraburi town, this cave is reached by climbing steps to a height of 100 metres. When sunlight shines on the cave walls, they sparkle like beautiful red, black and brown stars.



Sunflower Fields

Sunflower Fields

These are found between Lop Buri and Saraburi along the Phatthana Nikhom-Wang Muang route. The sunflowers are in full bloom in winter, and especially beautiful between December to January.

Chedi Phra Khun Mae

Located in Wat Khlong Mai, at Nong Mu, 42 kms. from the town along Highway 1 to Bangkok, and 15 kms. off to the left, the chedi contains a replica of the Buddha's footprint enshrining on a lotus base and surrounded by Buddha images. It was built for sons and daughters to remind them of the kindness and love of their mothers.

Tambon Phai Tam Bird Sanctuary

Located at Phai Tam, 17 kms. from the town along Highway 1, the sanctuary is home to various species of birds including black starling, dove, white-breasted waterhen, little cormorant, black-crowned night-heron, and bittern. The birds leave their nests to search for food in the early morning and fly back in the evening.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Hae Phra Khiao Kaeo

First day of the waxing moon in the 4th lunar month

Local people take the Phra Khiao Kaeo, which is believed to be the tooth of the Lord Buddha, from Wat Phra Phutthabat Museum and carry it around town in a procession.

Tak Bat Dok Mai or the Flower Offering Festival

Mid July

This impressive merit-making ceremony is held at the start of the three-month Buddhist Lent (June or July) when monks retreat to their temples. In the morning, people offer food and candles to Wat Phra Phutthabat. In the afternoon,



Tak Bat Dok Mai or the Flower Offering Festival

they collect a special yellow or white flower found on a hillside only during Buddhist Lent in Saraburi, which they offer to the monks for merit. After the monks have carried the flowers up the staircase to pay homage to the Buddha's footprint, people wait on the steps with bowls of clean water, which they pour onto the monks' feet as a means of cleansing one's mind.

Phra Phuttabat Homage-Paying Festival

1^{st}-15^{th} day of the waxing moon in the 3^{rd} lunar month, and 8^{th}-15^{th} day of the waxing moon in the 4^{th} lunar month

The event is held at Wat Phra Phutthabat twice a year to pay homage to the Phra Phuttabat, or the Lord Buddha's footprint.

Chao Pho Khao Tok Festival or Chao Pho Khao Tok Procession

1st day of the waxing moon in the 4th lunar month

This annual Chinese festival features fire-walking, the Lo Ko dragon parade, and Chinese opera. It is held for four days at Wat Phra Phutthabat Ratchaworamahawihan in Amphoe Phra Phutthabat.

Kam Fa Festival

2nd day of the waxing moon in the 3rd lunar month

Held at Phai Lio, Amphoe Don Phut, the Festival features making merit, attending sermons, and activities including a folk entertainment, a pitch and toss game, cockfighting, toasting rice in bamboo, etc.

Pa Sak Boat Racing Festival

Last Saturday or Sunday of September

This major regatta takes place at Sao Hai. Famous boats from all over the country join in the races.

LOCAL PRODUCTS

Hand-Woven Fabrics: Distinctive northeastern-style fabrics like Tin Chok silk and Mat Mi silk are sold at Ton Tan in Amphoe Sao Hai, Tao Phun in Amphoe Khaeng Khoi and Nong Khae in Amphoe Phra Phutthabat.

Bamboo baskets: Round baskets and those of other shapes are sold at Phu Krang in Amphoe Phra Phutthabat and Khok Yai in Amphoe Ban Mo.

Reed Mats: Striped mats are sold at Phu Krang in Amphoe Phra Phutthabat, Nong Mu in Amphoe Wihan Daeng, Song Khon and Ban That in Amphoe Kaeng Khoi and Ban Luang in Amphoe Don Phut. Other products include stone mortars, leatherware and mosaic tiles.

HOW TO GET THERE

By Car

From Bangkok, take Highway 1 (Phahonyothin) to the Bang Pa-in roundabout, and then turn right onto Mittraphap Road.

By Bus

Buses depart from the Bangkok Bus Terminal (Mochit) on Kamphaeng Phet 2 Road. Call +66 2936 2852-66 or visit www.transport.co.th for more information.

By Rail

From Bangkok's Hua Lamphong Railway Station, there are several trains running daily to Saraburi, some including stops at Kaeng Khoi and Muak Lek. Call +66 2220 4567 Hotline 1690, or www.railway.co.th for more information.



Wat Muang

ANG THONG



Wat Ton Son

Ang Thong is a small province of 968 sq. kms. beside the Chao Phraya River. The original settlement was a key frontier outpost of Ayutthaya when fighting the Burmese, located at Wiset Chai Chan on the banks of the Noi River. Most of the population moved to a new site on the left bank of the Chao Phraya River in the late 18^{th} century, located 108 kms. north of Bangkok.

CITY ATTRACTIONS

City Pillar Shrine

Located opposite the City Hall, the shrine features beautiful mural paintings.

Wat Ton Son

Located on the west bank of the river, this old temple enshrines "Somdet Phra Si Mueang", a beautiful seated Buddha image.

Other interesting temples in the town include Wat Ang Thong Worawihan with a beautiful stupa and chapel, Wat Chantharangsi with a gigantic Buddha image, and Wat Ratchapaksi with a large reclining Buddha image of the Ayutthaya period.

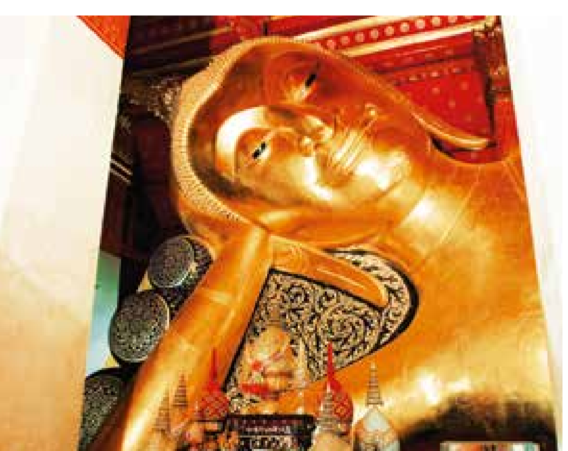
OUT-OF-CITY ATTRACTIONS

Wat Pa Mok

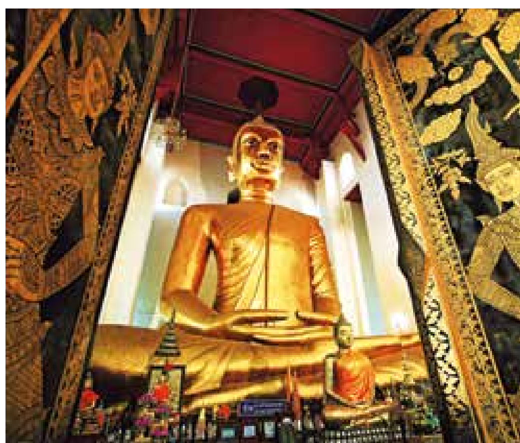
Located at Pa Mok on the west bank of the river, 18 kms. south of the Ang Thong city, this temple has a reclining Buddha image thought to be of the Sukhothai period, measuring 22.6 metres long, made of brick and mortar, and covered with gold. King Naresuan the Great visited the temple to pay homage to the Buddha image prior to leading the Thai army against the Burmese.

Wat Tha Sutthawat

Located on the east bank of the river at Bang Sadet, 15 kms. south of Ang Thong via



Wat Pa Mok



Wat Chaiyo

Highway 309, at the site of an old military river crossing, the temple has been renovated several times and houses Buddha images and historical remains of different periods.

Wat Sa Kaeo

Located 15 kms. south of Ang Thong via Highway 309, this temple dates back to 1699, and partly serves as a care centre for orphans from almost every part of Thailand. It also has a workshop making hand-woven products; such as skirts, table cloths and pillowcases.

Wat Chaiyo

Located 18 kms. from the town on the Sing Buri Road (Highway 32), this temple houses Phra Maha Phuttha Phim, a large seated Buddha image in the attitude of meditation, dating from King Rama IV's reign, and is well-known for its sacred amulets.

Wat Khun Inthapramun

Located 9 kms. along the Pho Thong Road and 2 kms. along the frontage road, this temple has a 50-metre long reclining open-air Buddha image. The temple is one of the oldest temples in Ang Thong but the Wihan housing the image was destroyed during the first fall of Ayutthaya. According to local lore, this temple was named after Khun Inthapramun, who was a tax official that diverted revenue to enlarge the original 40-metre image, for which he was whipped to death.

Phra Tamnak Khamyat

Located near Wat Khun Inthapramun in a rice field, this ruined brick pavilion, measuring 10 metres by 20 metres was built in King Borommakot's reign as his residence when visiting the area.

Wat Khoi

Located at Pho Rang Nok, 12 kms. along Wiset Chai Chan Road, and another 5 kms. off to the right, Wat Khoi features a museum that displays ancient boats and utensils. In front of the temple lies a fish sanctuary with some 50,000 fish of various species crowding the Noi River.

Wat Khun Inthapramun



Bamboo Basketry

Bats at Wat Chantharam

Located 4 kms. west of Pho Thong, the temple compound is home to numerous bats, which hang from the trees during the day and fly out for food at night.

Wat Khian

This Ayutthaya period temple at Wiset Chai Chan, 12 kms. from Ang Thong, has a chapel with fantastic mural paintings made by a local artisan depicting rural lifestyles. Other temples at Wiset Chai Chan of the same period include Wat Oi, Wat Wiset Chai Chan and Wat Luang.

LOCAL PRODUCTS

(Handicrafts Villages)

Ban Bang Sadet Village at Pa Mok is noted for producing delicate and beautiful "Court Dolls" from clay. Small and unglazed, they represent local customs, traditions, and folk plays.

Ban Bang Phae Riverside Village specialises in making traditional drums from cowhide and soft wood with exquisite craftsmanship. Small drums are sold as souvenirs.

Ban Bang Chao Cha Village in Amphoe Pho Thong 14 km. from the town continues the

art of traditional bamboo basketry, making both traditional and modern designs.

Along the Ayutthaya - Pa Mok Road there is a cottage industry of traditional Thai house prefabricated parts, employing fine workmanship.

SPECIAL EVENT

Boat Races

October

The major regatta takes place in October, in front of Wat Chaiyo on the Chao Phraya River together with the Luang Pho To Worship Festival. Races are also held at other riverside temples including Wat Pa Mok by the Chao Phraya River and Wat Pho Kriap by the Noi River at Pho Thong. Famous boats from all over the country take part in the races.

HOW TO GET THERE

By Car

1. From Bangkok, take Highway 1 (Phahonyothin Road) and Highway 32 via Bang Pa-in, Ayutthaya and Bang Pahan, a total distance of 105 kms.

2. From Bangkok, take the Pinklao-Talingchan Road, then Highway 340 to Suphan Buri, then Highway 350 to Ang Thong, a total distance of 150 kms.

By Bus

Frequent air-conditioned and non-air-conditioned buses depart daily from the Bangkok Bus Terminal (Mochit) on Kamphaeng Phet 2 Road. Call +66 2936 2852-66 for more information.



Ban Bang Sadet Village



Suphan Buri Tower

SUPHAN BURI



Dragon Descendants Museum

Occupies an area of 5,358 sq. kms. in the Central Plains northwest of Bangkok, Suphan Buri was an important border town during the Ayutthaya period. This province is an ancient town rich in culture and historical temples, located 169 kms. from Bangkok on the bank of the Tha Chin River, sometimes called the Suphan Buri River.

CITY ATTRACTIONS

City Pillar Shrine

Located on the west bank of the Suphan Buri River, built in the Thai style but later altered to a Chinese design, the shrine houses statues of the god Vishnu carved out of green stone.

Dragon Descendants Museum

The Museum was founded to mark the 20th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between the People's Republic of China and Thailand in 1996. It was designed to present the history of Chinese civilization, which has existed for 5,000 years and has been recognised among the world's most ancient and important ones. The museum is built in the shape of dragon, a well-known sacred imaginary animal, and inside the Dragon's body is the exhibition rooms display Chinese history from the legendary creation of the world, the periods of Huang Di and Yan Di, the dynasties from Xia, Shang, Zhou, Qin, Han, Three Kingdoms, Sui, Tang, Song, Ming, and Qing. Background of the Thai people of Chinese origin, including important historical events, histories of important people, philosophy, wisdom, and inventions by the Chinese forebears, are also presented through beautiful and modern media. The Celestial Dragon Village is a simulation of "Lijiang Town", which was an ancient city of a thousand years and has very beautiful Chinese architecture. Open every Wednesday to Sunday and on public holidays.

National Museum of Thai Rice Farmers

Located in front of the City Hall, the Museum is dedicated to the history and study of rice farming. Exhibits include tools of the trade, the many rites surrounding it, and the historical role of royalty in rice farming. Open Wednesday to Sunday, except public holidays; admission is free.

Wat Sanam Chai

At this abandoned temple on the east bank of the Suphan Buri River lie the ruins of a large Stupa, estimated to have been 70-80 metres tall. Human remains have been excavated here, assumed to belong to warriors who died in battle in former times.

Wat Suwannaphum

In this temple of the early Ayutthaya period located opposite the City Hall, there is a museum of antique artefacts; such as, bowls, cups, vases, Buddha images, clocks, and weapons.

Suphan Buri Tower

Rising 123 metres in the middle of a public park in the heart of Suphan Buri, the tower offers a panoramic view of the town with an exhibition centre and souvenir shops inside.

Wat Pa Lelai

Located on the river's west bank on Malaimaen Road, this temple is believed to have been built some 800 years ago during prosperous times. A huge sitting Buddha image named "Luangpho To", 23 metres in height, is enshrined in the main chapel. Celebratory fairs for the Buddha image are held annually in April and November. Also in the compound is an old Thai-style house called "Khum Khun Chang" built according to the description in a classic poem by Thailand's best-loved poet, Sunthon Phu.



Wat Pa Lelai

Wat Phra Si Rattana Mahathat

Located at Rua Yai on the river's west bank within the town, locally called Wat Phrathat, this temple was constructed during the early Ayutthaya period, over 600 years ago, and houses a large U-Thong-style Stupa containing Buddha relics.

Wat Phra Rup

Located on Khun Chang Road on the Tha Chin River's west bank opposite the market, built

during the early Ayutthaya period, this temple houses a 13-metre-long reclining Buddha image with the most beautiful face. There is also a Buddha's footprint made of wood, the only one in Thailand.

Wat Khae

Located 2 km. beyond Wat Phra Si Rattana Mahathat, this old temple includes a gigantic tamarind tree and old Thai-style houses.

OUT-OF-CITY ATTRACTIONS

Western Handicraft Promotion Centre

Located at Don Kamyan on Malaimaen Road about 8 km. from Amphoe U-Thong, the Centre promotes handicraft industries in Suphan Buri and nearby provinces. Many fine handicrafts are on display and on sale.

Tha Sadet Bird Sanctuary

The Sanctuary is 15 kms. from the town along the Don Chedi Road (Highway 322). The best viewing time is evening when a tremendous number of birds; such as, open-billed storks, herons, cormorants, painted storks, night herons, and white ibises can be seen returning home.

Don Chedi Monument

Located at Don Chedi, 31 kms. from the town, the Monument was constructed by King Naresuan the Great to commemorate his 1592 victory over King Maha Uparacha of Burma in the battle on the elephant's back. A statue of King Naresuan the Great mounting the elephant stands in front of the pagoda.

U-Thong Ancient Town

About 30 kms. east of the town near the Chorakhe Sam Phan River, U-Thong was a prosperous town during the Dvaravati period before Ayutthaya was founded as the capital in 1347.



Buffalo Village

U-Thong National Museum

The Museum exhibits artefacts; such as, tools, utensils, and Buddha images found in excavations and shows the development of communities who settled in Suphan Buri during different periods.

Wat Phai Rong Wua

Located at Bang Ta Then, 43 kms. from the town on the Bangkok road, this temple houses the world's largest metal-cast Buddha image, called Phra Phutthakhodom, which has a lap width of 10 metres and a height of 26 metres.

Buffalo Village

Situated on the Chai Nat Road at Si Prachan, dedicated to water buffalo, this new attraction pays tribute to a wonderful beast and seeks to inspire appreciation of its mighty contribution to Thailand. It includes a Farmer's Village, a display of the royal agricultural project, and Thai-style teak houses. Tel. +66 3558 1668 (Open on 08.00 a.m. - 18.00 p.m. everyday)

Bueng Chawak

Originally a part of Tha Chin River, this natural freshwater lake covers a huge area of over 1,080 acres. Its location is adjoined between Amphoe Hankha of Chai Nat province and Amphoe Doem Bang Nang Buat of Suphan Buri province. The lake was declared a wildlife sanctuary area in 1983, and by its great variety of flora and fauna; the government registered Bueng Chawak as an important wetland under the Ramsar Convertion. Around the lake is a nice and beautiful setting with shady trees and colorful lotuses, and a large flock of migratory lesser whistling duck from November to March depart in April. There is a rest area, facilities, and camping ground for people to enjoy picnicking. Bueng Chawak also houses many interesting attractions; such as the Aquarium which exhibits more than 50 freshwater and saltwater fish species, the Freshwater Crocodile Well, the Lion and Tiger Den, and the Rabbit Island.

Sam Chuk Market

Located on Highway 340, by Tha Chin River next to the Sam Chuk District Office, this Chinese community and old-fashioned market with wooden shop houses remain in the Thai original style a century ago. Visitors may be surprised to see a photograph shop, which takes pictures by a century-old camera, herbal drugstore, or enjoy tasting local sweets, sipping local-style coffee by the river. The three-storey building dedicated to be a museum can draw visitors



Aquarium at Bueng Chawak

back to yesteryear by the many photographs featuring the way of life in the old days. Opens everyday, but several activities that create more vibrant atmosphere to the market are happening only during weekends, causing the market to be very crowded.

SPECIAL EVENT

Don Chedi Memorial Fair

January

This annual fair is held for seven days to commemorate the historic Don Chedi battle in 1592 that led to the kingdom's liberation from Burmese occupation. It begins on 25 January, Royal Thai Armed Forces Day, with historical exhibitions and outdoor entertainment. Activities include a light-and-sound presentation of the elephant fight, a beauty pageant in traditional Thai dress, and stage performances.

Suphan Buri Chinese New Year Festival

January or February

Demonstrates the good relationship between Thailand and the People's Republic of China to promote and preserve cultural traditions. The Festival will be held in front of the Dragon Descendants Museum in Suphan Buri. The programme during the event includes Chinese cultural performances with the following highlights: fluorescent beautiful woman dancing and drums with a light show, the thousand-hand Bhotisattva (Guan Im) dance, changing masks, Chinese opera, acrobatics show, and Chinese dancing. Additionally, there is an exciting fireworks display at night.

LOCAL PRODUCTS

At Ban Ratsadon Bamrung in Amphoe Don Chedi, water hyacinths are made into wickerwork trays, baskets, purses, hats and cages. Hand-woven rattan and bamboo products are sold in Amphoe Song Phi Nong, Amphoe U-Thong and Amphoe Doem Bang Nang Buat.

Suphan Buri abounds in freshwater fish, prepared at many restaurants. Food products include soft cakes called Khanom Sali, canned truffles in syrup at Amphoe Si Prachan, and preserved mushrooms at Amphoe Deom Bang Nang Buat.

HOW TO GET THERE

By Car

There are many routes from Bangkok to Suphan Buri:

1. Via Bang Bua Thong (107 kms.)
2. Via Pathum Thani and Lat Lum Kaeo (115 kms.)
3. Via Ayutthaya (132 kms.)
4. Via Nakhon Pathom and Kamphaeng Saen (164 kms.)

By Bus

Both air-conditioned and non-air-conditioned buses depart from the Southern Bus Terminal (Sai Tai Mai) (Tel. +66 2894 6122) and Bangkok Bus Terminal (Mochit) (Tel. +66 2936 2852-66) for Suphan Buri many times daily. Also visit www.transport.co.th for more information.



Wat Chedi Hoi

PATHUM THANI

Pathum Thani is a neighbouring province of Bangkok, only 46 kms. north of the capital and possessing an area of 1,525 sq. kms. Situated in the fertile Chao Phraya River basin with many canals and tangerine orchards, the area was originally named Sam Khok. Founded in the Ayutthaya era, it was a settlement for Mon people migrating from Burma over 350 years ago. In 1815 when King Rama II made a royal visit to the area, the inhabitants offered him large quantities of lotus flowers, giving rise to the present name, as "Pathum" means "lotus" and "Thani" means "city".

CITY ATTRACTIONS

City Pillar Shrine

Located in the compound of the City Hall, the shrine was constructed in 1977 as a four-gabled pavilion housing the city pillar and statues of the gods Narai and Vishnu. One side of the shrine is a Buddha image of the Sukhothai style in the position of Subduing Evil.

Wat Hong Pathummawat

Located on the west bank of the Chao Phraya River in the town, this temple was constructed by Mon immigrants in 1764. There is a fishpond in front of the temple.

Wat Chinwararam

Originally known as Wat Makham Tai, this temple is located near the town centre on the west bank of the Chao Phraya River opposite the mouth of Khlong Rangsit Prayunsak. Inside the Wihan features mural paintings depict the story of the Buddha's 10 lives with poetic descriptions.



Wat Phai Lom

Wat Sing

This first Mon-style temple of Pathum Thani is located on the west bank of the Chao Phraya River, 3 kms. from the town centre. It houses Luangpho To, an Ayutthaya-style gold-covered Buddha image, and Luangpho Phet, a reclining Buddha image. The former monks' quarters are now served as a museum for Mon antiques. The villagers living around the temple produce old-style Mon bricks which are famous products of Pathum Thani.

Wat Phai Lom

On the east bank of the Chao Phraya River at Sam Khok, this temple is famed for the Asian open-bill storks that migrate from India to lay their eggs in the tall trees here from November to May. Other migratory birds include black-capped kingfishers, spot-billed pelicans, and black-headed ibis.

Wat Chedi Thong

Located on the west bank of the Chao Phraya River at Sam Khok, 8 kms. from Pathum Thani town, this place of worship features a Mon-style pagoda approximately 160 years old and a white jade Buddha image enshrined in the Ubosot.

Wat Phut Udom

This temple constructed in 1894 is located at Lam Sai, Amphoe Lam Luk Ka, 57 kms. along the Pathum Thani-Nong Chok Road. It is known for the mural paintings depicting hell and heaven from the Buddhist canon.

Wat Bua Khwan

This temple at Lat Lum Kaeo houses a Buddha image in an ascetic mode, cast in King Rama V's reign. Within the temple compound lies a pavilion with an exquisite teak tile roof called Sala Daeng, where King Rama VI presided over a Royal Ploughing Ceremony.

Wat Chedi Hoi

This small temple is located at Bo Ngoen, Lat Lum Kaeo, 18 kms. from the town. A tremendous number of giant oyster shells, eight million years old, were unearthed and piled up into the form of a Chedi. Each shell weighs at least 1 kilogramme.

Thung Rangsit

This marsh at Khlong Nueng attracts many migratory birds from cold climates; such as, ruby throats, blue throats, bush warblers, crakes, and rails.

Wat Worani Thammakayaram

This temple, better known as the Meditation Practice Centre, is located at Khlong Sam, 5 kms. off Phahonyothin Road, in an extensive wooded area suitable for meditation.

Dream World

Situated at Km. 7 on the Rangsit-Ongkharak Road, this is an extensive amusement park consisting of a European-style plaza, a garden featuring model replicas of world wonders, and a myriad of exciting game rides. Open everyday 10.00 a.m.-5.00 p.m. and until 7.00 p.m. on public holidays. Call +66 2533 1447, +66 2533 1449, +66 2533 1152 for more information.

Talat Thai

This is Thailand's largest, international standard, wholesale, and retail market for food products and fresh agricultural produce including fruits, vegetables, cut flowers, and pot plants. Covering an area of 200 acres, the market is located at Rangsit on Bangkok's outskirts, accessible by Phahonyothin Road.

Muay Thai Institute

This institute was established by the World Muay Thai Council to promote Thailand's primary martial art at national and international levels. It offers three types of Muay Thai (Thai boxing) courses for both Thais and foreigners, teaching combat skills and knowledge of Muay Thai culture. There are also special programmes for becoming an instructor or referee. The

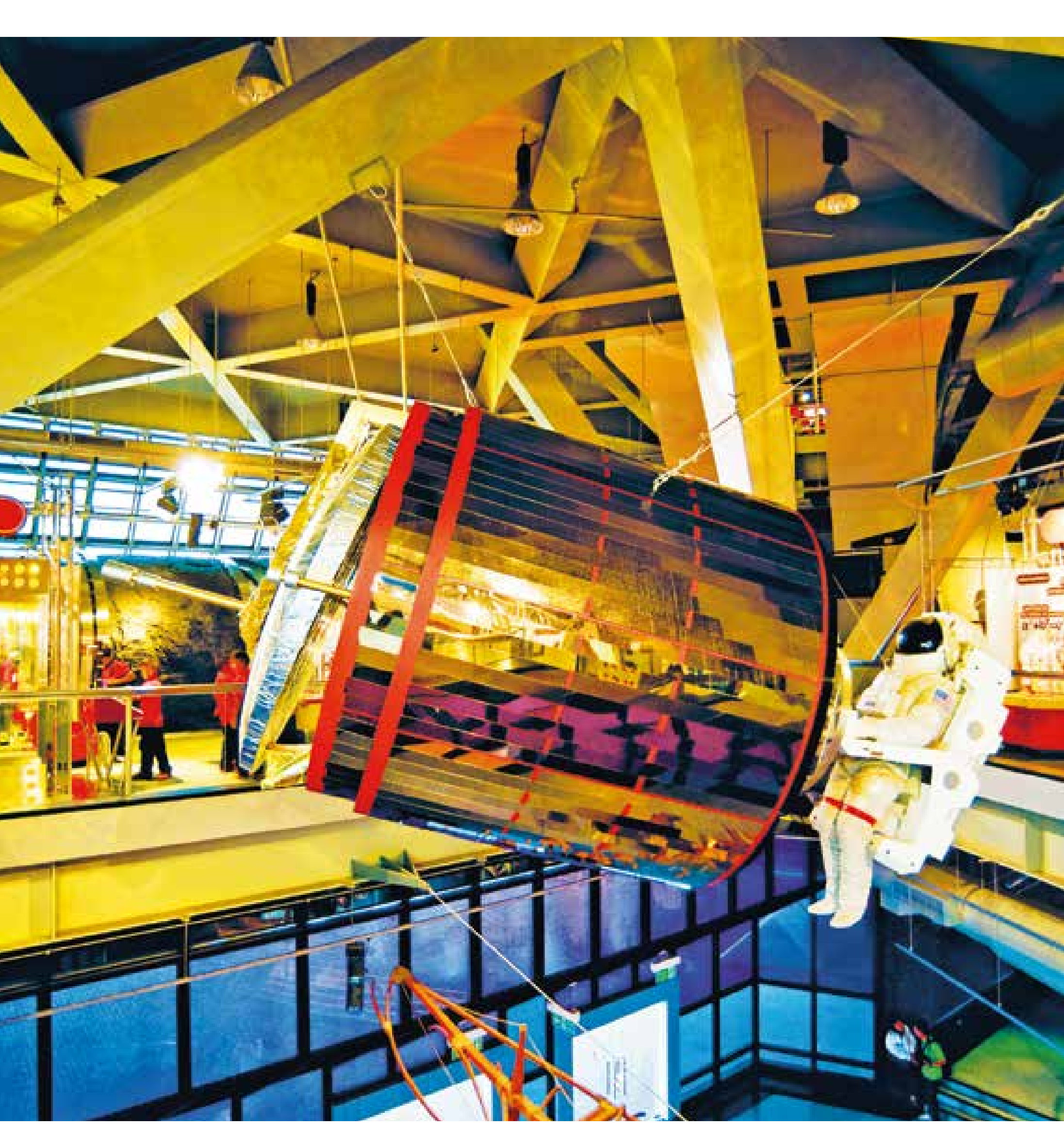


Dream World

Institute is situated at 323 Prachathipat, Thanyaburi, Pathum Thani 12130. Contact Tel. +66 2992 0096-9 for more information.

National Science Museum

Six exhibition floors are devoted to different aspects of science and technology, including traditional Thai technology. Visitors are encouraged to interact with exhibits in a



National Science Museum

hands-on educational approach. Located at Technopolis, Khlong 5, Rangsit-Nakhon Nayok Road. Open Tuesday-Sunday between 9.30 a.m. - 5.00 p.m. Tel. 0 2577 9999.

His Majesty the King's Golden Jubilee National Museum

Constructed in commemoration to His Majesty the King's 50th Accession to the Throne, the museum is situated on the Bang Na-Bang Pa-in Road at Tambon Khlong Ha, Amphoe Khlong Luang. It comprises 3 main galleries in a compound displaying items relating to H.M. the King; such as the Royal Biographies and activities of H.M. the king and the royal family, exhibitions of art, and the ethnology of the Thai people that will allow visitors to appreciate the art, culture, and people of Thailand. The Museum is open Monday-Friday from 9.00 a.m. – 4.30 p.m. Call +66 2902 7568-9 ext. 100-104 for more information.

The Golden Jubilee Museum of Agriculture

The Museum is located at Km. 46 - 48 Phahonyothin Road, and displays the story of agriculture through modern technology and models covering the various aspects of the agricultural process; such as, land development, forestry, fisheries, animal husbandry, etc. It is open from Tuesday-Sunday and public holidays from 09.30 a.m. - 3.30 p.m. For more information, please contact +66 2529 2211-4.

Khlong Sam Floating Market

This is one of the latest tourist attractions through the cooperation of both the private and public sectors. Visitors can witness vendors selling a variety of products like agricultural produce, handicrafts, and other local products of Pathum Thani.

LOCAL PRODUCTS

Tangerines are the most noted produce; tiny shrimp served with chilli, lemon juice and garlic, and Rangsit boat noodles are famous local dishes.

HOW TO GET THERE

By Car

There are many routes; such as via Bang Khen, via Nonthaburi and Pak Kret, and via Bang Yai, Bang Bua Thong, and Lat Lum Kaeo.

By Bus

Pathum Thani can be reached by the following Bangkok city buses:

Bus No. 33 from Sanam Luang

Bus No. 90 from Chatuchak, connecting at Rangsit to a Pathum Thani bus

Bus No. 29, 34, 39, 59, 95, 503 to Rangsit, connecting to a Pathum Thani bus

Bus No. 104 from Victory Monument to Pak Kret, then connecting to Bus No. 33 or No. 90.



Wat Chomphu Wek

NONTHABURI

Nonthaburi is over 400 years old, dating from when Ayutthaya was the capital, and is a province immediately to the north of Bangkok lying on the Basin of Chao Phraya River.

The town was originally located at Ban Talat Khwan, an area of canals and fruit orchards, but was moved twice by royal order in later centuries. Nonthaburi is now effectively a suburb of Bangkok.

CITY ATTRACTIONS

Old City Hall

This was constructed during the reign of King Rama VI in a European architectural style with fine carved teak wood decorated all over the building. The front area of the city hall facing the Chao Phraya River is served as a rest area for the public.

Museum of Anthropology

Thailand's first natural history museum, built in 1961, is located in the town centre and features exhibits on the evolution of plants, animals, human beings, and the earth. Open Tuesday to Saturday 8.30 a.m.- 4.30 p.m., and closed on public holidays.

Wat Khema Phirataram

Lying on the Chao Phraya River's east bank at Suan Yai, 2 kms. south of the town centre, this lovely temple was built in the Ayutthaya period and refurbished in the mid-19th century. The 30-metre-tall chedi contains Buddha relics and Ayutthaya-style Buddha images.

Wat Sangkhathan

This temple was built in the late Ayutthaya period to enshrine Luangpho To, a highly revered Buddha image. Later it was abandoned, but villagers continued paying homage to Luangpho To, and monks were invited for "Sangkhathan", to give offerings to monks, hence the temple's name. The temple has a peaceful ambience, resembling a forest meditation centre. Females can join a special nunhood project here. For more information call +66 2496 1240 -2.



Wat Sangkhathan



Wat Chaloem Phra Kiat

Wat Chaloem Phra Kiat

This royal temple located west of the Chao

Phraya River was constructed by King Rama III and King Rama IV, combining Thai and Chinese styles in an attractively peaceful compound. The chapel has a colourful mural painting of falling flowers, the door and window panels have lacquered gold leaf designs, the gables have raised plaster flower designs, the floor is decorated with mirrors, and the insides of the door and window panels have drawings of lotuses, birds, and aquatic animals. The main Buddha image is made entirely of copper. Other interesting historical artefacts include a Lankan-style pagoda.

Kanchanapisek Park

Covering an area of 40 acres and created to mark H.M. King Bhumibol's Golden Jubilee on the throne in 1997, the Park has a fine collection of water plants, garden plants, and aquatic life, and features several interesting Thai-style buildings. Open everyday 5.30 a.m.- 6.30 p.m.

Wat Chotikaram

This temple, located at Bang Phai and built in 1807, reflects several Chinese influences through its beautiful architecture.

Wat Prasat

Built in the reign of King Narai the Great (late Ayutthaya period), this well-preserved temple possesses sophisticated craftsmanship, including Nonthaburi's oldest mural paintings.

Wat Chomphu Wek

Located at Tha Sai, the temple was built in 1757 by the Mon with a Mon-style chedi. The chapel features murals of Buddha's life and two Sukhothai standing Buddha images.

Wat Tamnak Tai

This is an ancient temple located at Tha Sai, with a wihan and bell tower built in 1824.



Wat Pho Bang O

Wat Ku

Located on the river bank at Bang Phut, 4 kms. from Pak Kret, this temple was constructed by Mon people two centuries ago. Mon mural paintings illustrating the Buddha's life decorate the old chapel. A large reclining Buddha lies in front of the drowned Queen Sunantha's boat.

Wat Chonprathan Rangsarit

This is a peaceful, bamboo-shaded temple located at Bang Talat, Pak Kret.

Wat Pho Bang O

This charming old temple dates from the



Wat Amphawan

Ayutthaya period and is being renovated by the Fine Arts Department. The chapel has woodcarving with Chinese patterns and the door frames are decorated with beautiful sculptures made from sugarcane cement.

Bang Khu Wiang Floating Market

At the mouth of Khlong Bang Khu Wiang, this lively market is open between 6.00 a.m.- 8.00 a.m. Villagers bring harvested fruit by boat to sell here while monks come by boat to receive offerings from villagers. This traditional way of life is rarely seen nowadays.

Wat Suan Kaeo

The temple is a centre for Buddhist studies and projects guided by an innovative monk named Phra Phisal Dhamma Phati. It aims to improve the living standards of the poor and to develop society. Successful projects include the Rom Pho Kaeo, the shelter for the elderly, the supermarket for the poor, and the Suan Kaeo nursery projects. Open on weekdays from 10.00 a.m. – 4.30 p.m. and weekends from 9.00 a.m. – 4.30 p.m. Call 0 2595 1444 or 0 2595 1945 for more information.

Wat Amphawan

The most striking feature of this 18th century temple is a finely decorated wooden scripture hall in the middle of a pond.

Phra Srinagarindra Park

Spread over 40.8 acres in Nong Pru, Ban Mai, this lovely marshland park has a mini-garden, a sundial, and a fountain in the middle. Open daily and there is no admission fee.

Plant Market

Nonthaburi is one of Thailand's major producers of flowers and fruits. On a journey along the Taling Chan-Suphan Buri route via Amphoe Bang Kruai and Amphoe Bang Yai, a vast variety of plants, both flower and fruit, are available for gardeners.

Yod Muay Thai Gym

Located on Tiwanon road, this Thai boxing school teaching by former Thai boxing champion, and personal training to any gender and ages for healthy and protection. The school is open every day from 10.00 a.m. to 10.00 p.m. Call 09 4624 1924 for more information.

Ko Kret

This island was created by the digging of a canal across a bend in the Chao Phraya River in the Ayutthaya period. After the Burmese sacked Ayutthaya in 1767, it was probably deserted, after which the Mon people moved here. The island is shady and pleasant to visit, especially by bicycle. Ko Kret is especially lively during the weekends with several local products and souvenirs for visitors to enjoy shopping. A cruise along the Chao Phraya River is also available.



Pottery Making at Ko Kret

ATTRACTIONS ON KO KRET

Wat Poramaiyikawat or Wat Pakao

This temple, prized by the Mon, is unique for having Buddhist scriptures in the Mon language, following King Rama V's provision. The Mon-style chedi is a replica of one revered by all Mons. The chapel enshrines a reclining Buddha of the late Ayutthaya period decorated with striking mural paintings of royal insignia. Before the building stands a marble Buddha image. The convocation hall is decorated with items from Italy, as was popular in Rama V's reign. Open everyday between 8.30 a.m. - 4.30 p.m. The temple's museum exhibits artefacts that include earthen Buddha images, glassware, porcelain, and a Mon-style coffin, considered a masterpiece of aluminum plate carving.

Wat Sao Thong Thong

This temple, called Phia A Lat by the Mon, features the tallest chedi in Pak Kret. The chapel has beautiful murals on the ceiling in gold color.

Wat Chimphli Sutthawat

This temple consists of a small eye-catching chapel, with woodcarvings depicting an angel riding a chariot surrounded by floral patterns. The base is in the shape of a junk's hull.

Wat Phai Lom

Built in the late Ayutthaya period, this temple has a magnificent chapel featuring wood flower patterns and two small carambola-shaped chedis. The Mons called the temple "Phia To".

Kwan A Man

This is a Mon cultural centre featuring traditional Mon earthen pottery, whose distinctive beauty is now part of the provincial emblem. Some island homes make pottery items for daily use like flowerpots, mortars and jars in which visitors can go inside and browse. Khlong Khanom Wan is canalside homes specialising in sweet-making and give demonstrations to tourists.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Mon Songkran Festival

April

The Songkran festival is held for one week from 13 April. Celebrated around Pak Kret District



Mon Songkran Festival

Office, Ko Kret, the event features a Mon procession and entertainment.

Mon Dance Festival

April

The festival is held in April to show the beauty of Mon dance, which is an ancient dramatic art and today's Mons have managed to retain the skills of their forefathers. In Pak Kret, Phra Pradaeng and Pathum Thani, many people can still perform Mon dances and play the Mon alto oboe.

Nonthaburi Fruit Fair

April-June

This is an annual fair held to celebrate the abundance of such local fruits; such as, durian, mangosteen, mango and star fruit, beside the dam in front of the old city hall in Amphoe Mueang. Ornamental flowers are also sold during the fair.

Giving Offerings to 108 Monks Festival

October

This decades-old merit-making festival is held along Khlong Bangkok Noi at many temples including Wat Thai Charoen, Wat Bang Krai Nok, Wat Utthayan, and Wat Bang Krai Nai, on the eighth day of the waning moon in the twelfth lunar month.

LOCAL PRODUCTS

Ko Kret is an island in the Chao Phraya River that is famous for its distinctive pottery with a fine, red-black glaze and intricate design.

Fruit, most importantly long-branched and Mon Thong durian, is widely grown. In April and June, the province holds fruit festivals before the old City Hall.

Flowers, notably orchids, are sold on both sides of the Taling Chan-Suphan Buri Road. Dubbed " the flower road", this is a major market garden area.

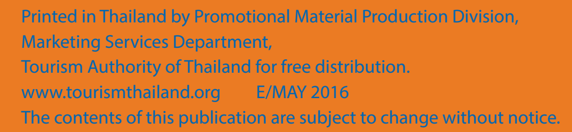
HOW TO GET THERE

Nonthaburi is within the Bangkok city bus system. It can also be reached on the Chao Phraya Express Boat which plies the river.



Ayutthaya





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